

VZCZCXRO3957
RR RUEHHM RUEHLN RUEHPB
DE RUEHWL #0112/01 0440049
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 130049Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2379
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
INFO RUEHNZ/AMCONSUL AUCKLAND 0640
RUEHAP/AMEMBASSY APIA 0187

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 WELLINGTON 000112

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STATE FOR S/ES-O/CMS/ EAP/EX AND EAP/ANP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [AMED](#) [KFLO](#) [AEMR](#)

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: POST CONTINGENCY PLANNING AND TRIPWIRES

REF: A) 05 STATE 219189; B) 05 Apia 00150

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¶1. In response to reftel, Embassy Country Team met to discuss New Zealand Government (GNZ) preparations against Avian Influenza pandemic.

¶2. Llywelyn Graeme will input tripwire data into the Tripwire Reporting and Integrated Planning System (TRIPS).

¶3. New Zealand's Ministry of Health (MOH) will take the lead if there is a pandemic in-country. The MOH has a national pandemic plan, and District Health Boards have local plans. An intersectoral group from other Government Ministries is considering non-health issues that are directly affected by a pandemic, such as potential school closures, border management, and the maintenance of critical infrastructure, including supply of food and water and law and order.

The GNZ is considering setting a target of 3 weeks for persons to be reasonably (not completely) self-reliant during an advanced event or outbreak. This 3-week period would be one in which persons made only limited trips to restock food items, water supplies and things of that nature -- i.e. not sustained social contact. This target figure may change depending on New Zealand's ongoing assessment of risk and readiness.

- New Zealand is not on the regular migratory pathways of any waterfowl. The small number which do reach New Zealand mostly originate from southern Australia. Other migratory birds visit estuaries along the Asian coastline, Philippines and Australia on their annual migrations south from arctic Russia. However, they are not "waterfowl" and are not regarded as a high risk for introducing avian viruses into New Zealand. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) is currently undertaking surveillance in wild birds to assess the influenza status of waterfowl and shore birds.

- The New Zealand Government (GNZ) is following the advice of the WHO by stockpiling anti-viral medicine for use in a volume equivalent to approximately 20% of the population. No decision on the best use of the stockpile will be made until the nature of the pandemic is known.

The MOH has set up a Pandemic Influenza Technical Advisory Group which advises the Ministry on the international situation and provides recommendations on the appropriate nature of New Zealand's responses.

In the event of a pandemic, public announcements would be made through TV, the radio, and other media channels. Some workplaces and schools may close.

- Available host country medical treatment facilities in the event

of an outbreak: In the event of an outbreak, hospitals and primary care practitioners may not be able to deal with the potential large numbers of affected individuals. The MOH is considering and planning for other possible options, such as community assessment centers or calling a national free health advice number staffed by registered nurses and designating specific quarantine stations. Citizens could be expected to care for themselves and others at home.

The Ministry of Health has a formal arrangement with Australia's CSL Ltd--the only influenza vaccine manufacturer in the Southern Hemisphere--which should give New Zealand a supply if they need a pandemic vaccine. However, the vaccine is currently not available since the manufacture of a vaccine can only start once the strain of the virus causing the pandemic is known.

Mission facilities have adequate emergency food and water supplies to allow American employees and family members to shelter in place for approximately 1-2 weeks. Small stockpiles are distributed at centrally-located residences in neighborhoods with large concentrations of Embassy staff.

4. Preparedness Measures Taken/To Be Taken

(a) Briefings: In November, the Embassy distributed to Mission personnel the Department's cable on "Frequently asked questions on Avian Influenza." An Avian Flu Warden Message is posted on the Embassy web site and includes hyperlinks to WHO, CDC, State Dept, and GNZ web pages.

(b) Medical Expertise: Mission New Zealand has no in-house health unit operation but depends on a local Post Medical Advisor for all medical assistance. We virtually have no staff with medical background and skills; our canvassing identified one employee with a general nursing background at ConGen Auckland.

(c) Tamiflu/PPE: Post has no/no supply of Tamiflu on hand as we

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were not among the initial high-risk post identified for first shipments. Post currently has disposable gloves, soap, and bleach on hand. A supply of masks, soap and gloves are available at ConGen Auckland, primarily for consular personnel. To be Done: We need to determine amounts of Tamiflu and other supplies needed if tripwire number 2 is reached.

(d) Security: When the Tamiflu arrives, it will be locked securely in a well-protected area within the Chancery.

(e) Emergency Stockpiles: Management has minimum numbers of emergency supplies (food, fuel, water, blankets, medicines) pre-positioned at several locations in Wellington and Auckland.

(f) Continuity of Operations: EAC discussed possibility of mini-command centers in Wellington in connection with other natural disasters (earthquake, land slides) that would preclude all personnel being able to gather at one alternate point. These mini-centers would require staff to travel shorter distances, or work from home.

With reduced staffing, ConGen Auckland would likely suspend NIV and IV operations; ACS services could be continued with one consular officer and reduced ACS staff. If required to work from home, Consul would use post's emergency ACS laptop with its CD of AmCit names to communicate with American community. Additional CDs would be positioned in ACC to ensure dissemination of info to AmCits. RSO maintains up-to-date lists of staff home and cell phone numbers. TO DO: Up date personal e-mail addresses.

(g) Drawdown Planning: Mission sections are reporting to Management their minimum staffing requirements to ensure continuity of operations. We are working closely with Embassy Apia in the event that small island community were to be affected. Given their limited access to travel, and limited health facilities, COM likely would request authorized or ordered departure for Embassy and Peace Corps Americans sooner than for New Zealand staff.

(h) Medical Issues: No staff medical issues have been reported; but one EFM is pregnant and one dependent child has respiratory problems.

(i) Pre-planned Packets: The Management Office has prepared travel orders for American DH staff and EFMs.

(j) Strategies for Airport Closures: As an island nation, airport closing sends a fairly definitive message that no one enters or exits the country. This is an option that the MOH definitely would consider, but we believe would require some advance notification before implementation.

(k) Town Hall Briefings: In meetings with AmCits in Wellington and Christchurch in December, consular staff responded to avian flu inquiries. ConGen will continue to address avian flu in all subsequent outreach visits to AmCits throughout New Zealand. With the recent installation of ACS+ software, ConGen is also able to disseminate AI-related news and updates more easily. CA outreach materials have been shared with major expat American organizations, such as the American Chamber of Commerce. An AI warden message is posted on the Embassy website.

TRIPWIRES AND RESPONSES

15. Tripwire One:

A spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal to human cases or sustained human-to-human transmission in a neighboring country.

Tripwire One Responses:

- EAC meets to confirm that tripwire has been crossed. ConGen Auckland, USAP (U.S. Antarctic Program) Christchurch, and Embassy Apia participate by DVC or are notified by telephone.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES staff and dependents (for Embassy and constituent posts).
- ConGen to notify Amcits via warden system, Embassy web site and local media.
- Restrict official and unofficial travel to suspected areas.
- Given New Zealand's island separation, and depending on the specific neighboring country affected, authorized departure of non-essential staff and family members may not be considered essential at this time. Ensure travel orders for all personnel are prepared in event of further evacuation necessity.
- Monitor public announcements from New Zealand Government.

16. Tripwire Two:

A spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal

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to human cases or sustained human-to-human transmission within the Auckland consular district but not on North Island (where both Wellington and Auckland are located), (i.e., Cook Islands, Niue, or South Island)

Tripwire Two Responses:

- EAC meets to confirm that tripwire has been crossed. ConGen Auckland, USAP Christchurch, and Embassy Apia participate by DVC or are notified by telephone.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES employees and dependents (for Embassy and constituent posts).
- Restrict official and unofficial travel to suspected areas.
- ConGen to notify Amcits via warden system, Embassy web site and local media.
- Monitor public announcements and recommended advice from New Zealand Government. Consider mirroring their actions for Mission personnel and AmCits, as appropriate.
- Consider requesting authorized departure of non-essential staff and family members.
- In coordination with the Department, prepare press guidance.
- Institute mandatory sick leave for employees who exhibit flu-like symptoms or has a family member exhibiting flu-like

symptoms.

- Implement use of protective equipment (gloves, masks, etc.) according to MED guidance for high-risk-to-exposure personnel.
- AmConGen Auckland to limit consular services as necessary, such as instituting an appointment-based system for all non-emergency services so as to reduce visitors in the waiting room.
- Ensure that staff procure additional supplies of food and water for Embassy and home use. Ensure staff with medical issues have adequate supplies of required medications if home quarantine becomes necessary.

17. Tripwire Three:

A spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal to human cases or sustained human-to-human transmission on North Island:

Tripwire Three Responses:

- EAC meets to confirm that tripwire has been crossed. ConGen Auckland, USAP Christchurch, and Embassy Apia participate by DVC or are notified by telephone.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES staff and dependents.
- Cancel incoming official travel to host country, except for personnel involved in investigative/containment efforts, or as otherwise deemed necessary by COM.
- ConGen Auckland coordinate with CA/OCS on issuance of guidance (public announcement or travel warning, as appropriate) urging American citizens to defer all non-emergency travel to host country and particularly the affected regions.
- In coordination with the Department, prepare press guidance.
- Implement home quarantine of any staff or dependents who have been in contact with a person confirmed to have an AI infection and implement at-home monitoring procedure.
- If authorized or ordered departure is not permissible, instruct all non-emergency American and LES staff to remain home on administrative leave. Children should remain home from school.
- Implement social distancing (limit movements of all personnel and dependents in the city).
- Implement 24-hour telephone hotline to monitor health of Embassy staff and families. Encourage self-reporting by employees and their families of illness and medical developments.
- Consider relocating Embassy personnel to designated residences.
- Depending on level of public inquiries, Embassy staffs and equips a situation room.
- ConGen Auckland to establish a database tracking American citizens who have been quarantined, hospitalized, or ill at home. Direct American citizen community to local treatment facilities.
- ConGen Auckland to reduce consular operations to emergency consular services only.
- Divide the Marine Security Guard detachment into two separate and independent entities to reduce the risk of the spread of the disease and ensure proper coverage of classified materials.
- Restrict visitor access to Mission.
- Consider prophylactic Tamiflu treatment only for staff who are required to be in direct contact with potentially infected persons.

18. Tripwire Four:

A spike in the number and/or broadening geographic spread of animal-to-human cases or human-to-human transmission near or within Wellington:

Tripwire Four Responses:

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- EAC meets to confirm that tripwire has been crossed. ConGen Auckland, USAP Christchurch, and Embassy Apia participate by DVC or are notified by telephone.
- Provide Mission briefings for American and LES staff and dependents.
- ConGen Auckland coordinate with CA/OCS on issuance of guidance (public announcement or travel warning, as appropriate) urging

American citizens to defer all non-emergency travel to host country and particularly the affected regions.

- In coordination with the Department, prepare press guidance.
- Implement home quarantine of any staff or dependents who have been in contact with a person confirmed to have an AI infection and implement at home monitoring procedure.
- If authorized or ordered departure is not permissible, instruct all non- emergency American and LES staff to remain home on administrative leave. Children should remain home from school.
- Implement social distancing (limit movements of all personnel and dependents in the city).
- Implement 24-hour telephone hotline to monitor health of Embassy staff and families. Encourage self-reporting by employees and their families of illness and medical developments.
- Consider relocating Embassy personnel to designated residences or working from home.
- Depending on level of public inquiries, Embassy staffs and equips a situation room.
- ConGen Auckland to establish a database tracking American citizens who have been quarantined, hospitalized, or ill at home. Direct American citizen community to local treatment facilities.
- ConGen Auckland to reduce consular operations to emergency consular services only.
- Divide the Marine Security Guard detachment into two separate and independent entities to reduce the risk of the spread of the disease and ensure proper coverage of classified materials.
- Restrict visitor access to Mission.
- Consider prophylactic Tamiflu treatment only for staff who are required to be in direct contact with potentially infected persons.

19. Tripwire Five:

Mission employee or eligible family member develops AI infection.

Tripwire Five Response:

- Employee or eligible family member begins Tamiflu treatment.
- Medevac, if possible.
- Consider Mission closure for all but essential operations.

MCCORMICK